

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 11365 141734Z

47

ACTION IO-13

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FODAG

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TAGS: OCON, FAO, AFIN

SUBJECT: 69TH SESSION FAO COUNCIL

REF: ROME 11279

SUMMARY: THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE NUMBERS OF THE FAO COUNCIL HAVE EXPRESSED THEIR SUPPORT FOR DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA'S PROPOSALS ON PROGRAMS, STRUCTURES AND POLICIES OF THE ORGANIZATION. IN ONE AND A HALF DAYS OF INITIAL DISCUSSION OF AGENDA ITEM 4, 40 OF 42 COUNCIL MEMBERS INTERVENED AS DID 17 OBSERVERS. MOST DEVELOPING COUNTRIES WERE UNQUALIFIED IN THEIR SUPPORT OF THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PROPOSALS, EXCEPT REPRESENTATIVES OF A FEW AFRICAN AND ARAB COUNTRIES WHO SAID THE PROPOSALS WERE TOO MODEST. CRITICISM OF THE PROPOSALS IN VARYING DEGREES BY THE UK, ITALY, FRANCE, JAPAN, GRG, CANADA, AND THE NETHERLANDS FOCUSED ON THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM AS A WHOLE AND THE USE OF ASSESSED FUNDS FOR TECHNICAL COOPERATION. QUALIFIED U.S. SUPPORT FOR THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL'S PROPOSALS WAS INTERPRETED BY SAOUMA AS CONSTRUCTIVE AND

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PAGE 02 ROME 11365 141734Z

MANY DEVELOPING COUNTRY DELEGATES SAID PRIVATELY THIS

WAS A MORE POSITIVE STANCE THAN EXPECTED FROM U.S. DEBATE
ON THIS ITEM WILL RESUME JULY 15 WHEN A SPECIFIC DRAFT
DECISION WILL BE CIRCULATED FOR ADOPTION BY THE COUNCIL.
END SUMMARY.

1. THE PROPOSED \$18.5 MILLION TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROGRAM,
TO BE FINANCED FROM SAVINGS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE BUDGET FOR
THE CURRENT BIENNIUM, RECEIVED THE GREATEST ATTENTION.
SEVERAL DEVELOPING COUNTRY DELEGATES PRAISED THE PROPOSAL
AS AN OVERDUE ACTION TO FULFILL THE FAO'S ORIGINAL MANDATE.
THE UK, SUPPORTED BY SEVERAL OTHER DCS SUGGESTED THAT THE TCP
SHOULD BE TIME-LIMITED FOR 1976-77 AND USED PRIMARILY TO FUND
PROJECTS IN JEOPARDY BECAUSE OF THE UNDP'S CURRENT FINANCIAL
CRISIS. JAPAN CHALLENGED THE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF THE PROPOSED
DIVERSION OF BUDGETED FUNDS BUT THE PREVAILING VIEW WAS THAT THE
FAO CONFERENCE LAST NOVEMBER PROVIDED SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY FOR THE
DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO REVIEW THE PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET AND FOR
THE COUNCIL TO ALTER IT.

2. DECENTRALIZATION WAS WELCOMED IN PRINCIPLE BY MOST
DELEGATIONS. LDC REPRESENTATIVES STRESSED THEIR INTEREST IN
MAXIMIZING THE USE OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. THE MAJOR DAC
COUNTRIES, INCLUDING THE U.S., NOTED THEIR CONCERN THAT FAO
COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD RELATE TO THE UNDP IN A MANNER
THAT WOULD PERMIT MAXIMUM SHARING AND MINIMIZE DISRUPTIVE
RIVALRIES AT THE COUNTRY LEVEL. SAOUMA'S REMARK THAT IN
HIS VIEW THE UNDP COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES WOULD BE
PRIMUM INTER PARES WAS REASSURING BUT LEFT OPEN THE
SPECIFIC DETAILS OF AGENCY RELATION. A NUMBER OF
LDC DELEGATES STATED THAT DECENTRALIZATION TO THE COUNTRY
LEVEL SHOULD NOT BE EFFECTED AT THE EXPENSE OF THE REGIONAL OFFICES.

3. ALL DELEGATIONS WHICH SPOKE OF PROPOSALS TO REDUCE THE
NUMBER OF PUBLICATIONS AND MEETINGS GAVE SUPPORT TO THIS
GENERAL THRUST.

4. CANADA AND BRAZIL SUPPORTED THE U.S. VIEW THAT EXISTING
FAO BODIES SHOULD BE EMPLOYED FOR DISCUSSIONS PURSUANT TO
UNCTAD IV OF COMMODITIES IN WHICH THE FAO HAD ACKNOWLEDGED
COMPETENCE. SAOUMA REPORTED THAT HE HAD ALREADY OFFERED
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PAGE 03 ROME 11365 141734Z

UNCTAD HIS SUPPORT FOR THIS PURPOSE AND THAT HE WAS PREPARED
TO ADJUST THE PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET TO ACCOMMODATE THIS
ACTIVITY.BEAUDRY

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